



Carriage House Crier

WOLCOTT HISTORICAL SOCIETY • P.O. Box 51, Wolcott, NY 14590

Fall 2015

www.wolcottny.org

FREE

To sponsor a newsletter, contact Norma Stewart at rhstewart@mail.com or Mary Ann Ryan at tommaryryan1@gmail.com.

The Traditions of FUNERAL SERVICES of Wolcott

In early America, home funerals were the practice. Visitation was held in the front parlor followed by a procession to the church and cemetery.

Early American houses often did not have parlors, as time went on, proper families made sure they had front rooms filled with their finest possessions, quality furniture, portraits, sterling silver and often a piano. These rooms were used for special occasions, such as a funeral. It was considered ill luck to carry a body through the house or out the door feet first. Therefore a special door in the front room or parlor was there for that purpose. The caskets were made by a carpenter or one could be purchased at the General Store or a Furniture Store. During the Civil War times, because the bodies had to be trans-

ported home, embalming became the practice.

The records of the funeral businesses in Wolcott are very sparse. Researching, I found that in 1857, David Lewis Wadsworth set up a Furniture and Undertaking Business located on the east side of Mill Street near East Main Street. His home was where Dr. Single's office was. Thus he was close to his business. In 1867, James A. Phillips opened a Furniture & Undertaking business. In 1900, Fred Bievier also had a Furniture & Undertaking business in the vicinity of where the Palace Theatre is today, (2005). Also at this time Edwin J. Cornwell also had a Furniture & Undertaking business. In 1926 there was on Main Street the Bush-Robertson Co., Inc. Greater Furniture Store. Again the Under-

taking business was associated with furniture. John B. Robertson was the manager as well as a partner.

In the early 1850s George Arne built the big columned, white home on the west side of 44 New Hartford Street. Before this home was a funeral home, it was occupied by several tenants and owners. One of the tenants was Oliver T. LaDue Jr. and his wife. After Mr. LaDue passed away in 1872, his wife, Fanny, remained in the house. Early 1900's Charles H. Thomas, publisher of the Lake Shore News, purchased the property. The next tenant in this house were father and son, who built in 1926 the Palace Theatre. Their names were Gutstadt.

In 1930 John B. Robertson purchased the house. There were several renovations with the purpose of using part of the main floor for embalming, storage of supplies and caskets, and a chapel. The Robertsons used the upper floor as a residence. Bush-Robertson continued to offer to the public funeral arrangements. Around 1943, it became known as Robertson Funeral Home with John's son, George joining his father. At that time they also offered ambulance services.

The first part of 1973, Mr. & Mrs. Donald Colvin purchased from George W. Robertson the Funeral Home. It became known as the Colvin Robertson Funeral Home. In August of 1997 the Norton Funeral Home of Sodus joined Colvin as partners. The business became known as Colvin, Robertson and Norton. Since 1980's, Don Colvin and James Norton had been offering vacation coverage for each other. January 2011, the funeral home became officially named Norton Funeral Home. In the book Wolcott, New York Strolling Down the Side Streets, Volume Two by John Countryman & Norma Pearson there is a section about the Funeral Homes with pictures.

If anyone has pictures, corrections, or additional information on this article please contact Norma Stewart, Historian or any member of the Historical Society Board. Thank you.



The Carriage House Museum is open all year!

During the winter, we will be open

Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.



*Docents
needed!*

Upcoming Events

- November 21 — **Bake Sale 8:30 - 2:00** or gone, at Bob's Supermarket. *If you like to bake, please contribute!*
- December 12 — **Festival of Trees** in Northrup Park at **6:00 p.m.** Also, **OPEN HOUSE** at the Museum from **10-2.**
- March 12 — **Wine Tasting Dinner** Details to be announced at a later time.
- Other programs in the planning stages: **Tea Party, Annual Dinner/Program**

Mary Ann Morrell Ryan

Board Member Bio



Mary Ann is the oldest of 8 children. Her Dad was a tenant farmer. The family moved often to where the work was. Mary Ann attended schools in Red Creek and Wolcott. In 1954 she was a graduating member at Leavenworth Central.

Mary Ann met her husband, Tom, who was just out of service in February 1955. Love at first sight? October 26, 1956, they were united in marriage. They had two children, Bill, who has a floral business in Houston, Texas, and Tracy who passed away in 2007 of pancreatic cancer. After celebrating 57 years of marriage, Tom, the love of Mary Ann's life, died of myasthenia gravis. One of Mary Ann's passions is raising African violets. For 18 years she has been a member of the African Violet & Gesneriad Society of Syracuse, and presently is secretary, historian & annual show coordinator. She not only exhibits violets but is a Senior Judge at the violet shows.

In 1966, the couple purchased a house on North Huron Road in Wolcott. Mary Ann & Tom raised the children there, and Mary Ann still calls home. Mary Ann & Tom joined the Historical Society. They have taken many photos documenting various events in the Wolcott area. Mary Ann is a very active board member and participates in most of the activities.

Mary Ann is a 12 year member of the Wolcott American Legion Auxiliary, and at the present time is the secretary and historian. She also chairs the Memorial Day Poppy campaign. She enjoys working in the flower garden and growing her African Violets. She is an active grandmother, great-grandmother and enjoys all the children's activities.

Mary Ann is a great organizer and a tireless worker. The community is indeed enhanced by her participation in many of the community activities. Thank you, Mary Ann Ryan!



Wolcott Historical Society

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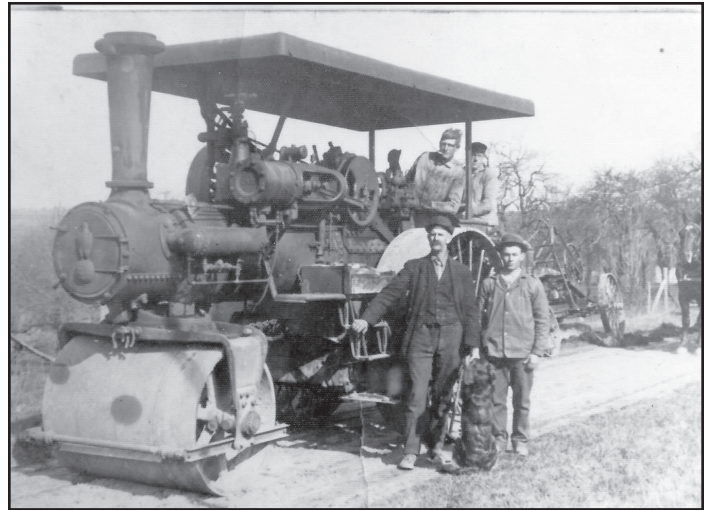
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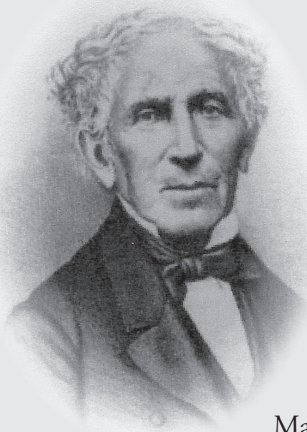
Norma Stewart
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This machine was used in paving roads in Wayne County, circa 1920s. Does anyone have any idea of who the men might be?

Isaac Leavenworth

Born 1781 - Died 1860



Isaac, the son of Asa and Submit (Scott) Leavenworth, was born in Watertown, Connecticut. He became active as a merchant in the village of Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

He became a resident of Wolcott, and from 1838 to his death was closely identified with the interest of the village. As was stated in the last newsletter he donated the land and half the money for the school. Much of the prosperity of Wolcott was due to this public-spirited man. He was a business man of fine talents, promptness, energy, and truthfulness. As a Christian, he was sincere and consistent. Isaac served many years as an elder in the Presbyterian Church. In 1849, he was elected to the legislature and discharged his duties to the entire satisfaction of his constituency.

Mr. Leavenworth married Ann Lee Little of Pittsfield, Mass., in 1811. They had a daughter, Caroline Emily, and a son Elisha Lee.

Some years before his death, he sent for Elisha Warner Leavenworth, to draw up a will. Mr. Leavenworth advised him to not make a will, as he was in good health, but to administer upon his estate himself, and do this in his lifetime

what he had proposed to do in the will. There were many projects that he had built at his own expense. To name a few, a parsonage, a lecture room, and the nucleus of the Glenside Cemetery, which at one time was called Leavenworth Cemetery. His grave site was placed on a knoll towards the north part of the cemetery and has an iron fence surrounding it.

He was always generous and helped any projects of fund raising that came before him.

His home was on West Main Street across from the present Presbyterian Church. (The original Presbyterian Church was where Gallo's store is, 2015). Later, this home was purchased by Gardner Northup and restructured. The gentleman in chair on sidewalk looks to be Isaac Leavenworth.



MEMBERSHIP

\$10.00 — Individual Membership

\$15.00 — Family Membership

\$25.00 — Group Membership

\$100.00 — Contributing & Sustaining Membership

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Send to:

Wolcott Historical Society

P.O. Box 51

Wolcott, NY 14590

An excellent way to help secure the future of the Wolcott Historical Society is to designate the WHS as a beneficiary of your will, foundation, or trust. We are a non-profit 501-(c)-(3) corporation. Donations are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

COMMEMORATIVE BRICK ORDER

We will continue to take brick orders and place when we have received a minimum. If you would like information or to place an order please call Bob Stell 315-594-9065 or Linda Shippers 315-594-2765. Be sure to stop and view the many bricks that have already been placed in front of the museum.

Below is a picture of a few of the bricks.

Picture taken by Jon Countryman, 2014.



A Postcard depicting the Baptist Church before the annex was added on the south side and before the handicap access addition.

The fountain has the original configuration. This postcard picture was taken sometime after Venus fountain was placed in 1913.

Hobos

This information is taken from an article written by Beulah L. Morrell and published in the Wayuga Community Newspapers, Inc., in June 30, 1994. This was written as she remembered the 20s and 30s.

"On the farm in the 20s and 30s we depended on the so called 'hobos' for picking our apples. The apple trees were often 30 ft. or more tall. Long, heavy ladders could only be handled by men.

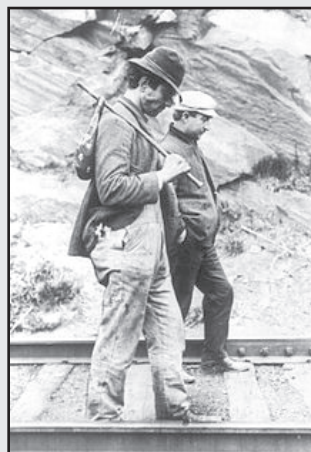
The ones I had any knowledge of were from Ithaca. They 'rode the rails' or stole into box cars. The railroad hired security guards to discourage this.

There was a camp along the railroad nearby for those 12 to 20 men who took over a barn in an isolated area. They lived on canned beans, stale bread and garden produce from any farm that did not have a barking dog.

Most of them were willing to work, as it meant good pay, good food and a bed for 3 or 4 weeks. A farmer would go to the camp and get two or three at the most, likely looking men

to pick apples".

The Hobos had a language all their own and they developed a visual code. The code would be written with coal or chalk to provide directions, information & warnings to others in the brotherhood. We know that there were hobos in this area and if any of you have any stories of hobos, please contact me, Norma Stewart.



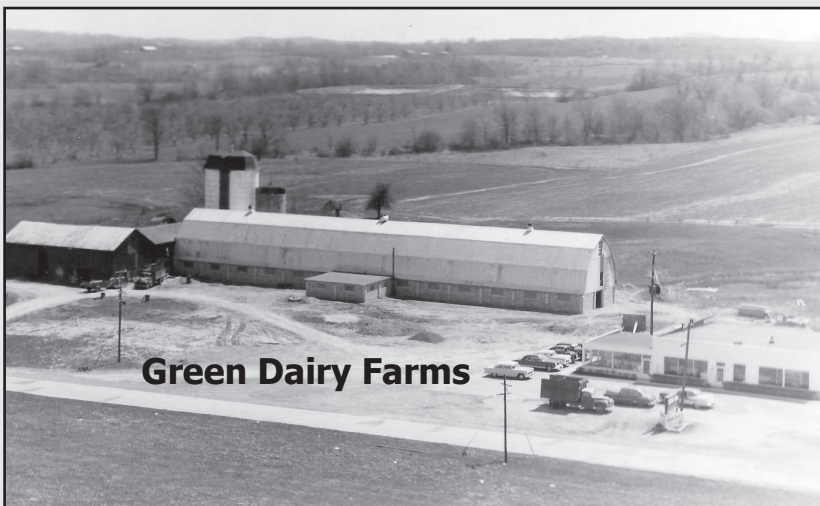
Book Signing



The Wolcott Historical Society welcomed 24 visitors to the Carriage House Museum, Wolcott, for a book signing and program by author Richard "Dick" Camp on October 24, 2005. Dick has written several books and also magazine articles on his experiences in the Marines and about different battles in several wars the U.S. Marines have been involved in. The book he spoke about was "The Battle for the City of the Dead", which was about a Marine battalion's fight to capture the Iraqi city of Najaf in 2004. This book has narratives of the soldiers who fought there, many colored photos and maps to support the text.

Dick's presentations are fascinating and riveting. We have invited Dick to return next October, 2016, to do another book signing.

Thank you Dick.

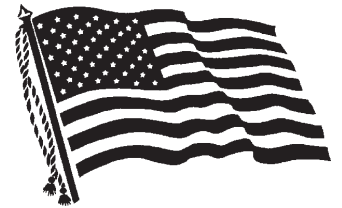


This picture was taken at the Elf Mitchell Farm, later sold to Elliott Green, next to the property where the big barn was located, (old rt. 104.) On the left side of the picture is the threshing rig of Fernando Merrill, that went from farm to farm in the areas of Huron, Wolcott & North Wolcott. Merrill's two sons, John & Charlie helped their father. The picture was donated to the Museum by Rebecca Sullivan whose great grandfather was Fernando Merrill. Thank you.



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*** We would like to express our
condolences to the families of
Ken Van Fleet, Jack Sparnon,
and Marvin Stewart. ***



VETERANS DAY

The Museum has set up a display honoring our area veterans, especially those in Wolcott. Harlow Everett has shared the pictures of his siblings that served at various times in the military. These will be added to our military screen, along with the rest of his brothers.

Here are 2.



**Above, Anna Everett, Army
At left, Ralph Everett, Army**



**If you were in the military, we'd like your picture and a little something about you.
We want to compile an album to preserve for the future your picture and experiences. Thanks**